

# SWRMC Celebrates LGBT Pride Month

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SAN DIEGO (NNS) -- Sailors and civilians attended Southwest Regional Maintenance Center's (SWRMC) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month celebration held at the Naval Base San Diego (NBSD) theater June 15.

The event included a historical brief on LGBT discrimination and activism throughout the military, with a panel of participants who discussed and answered attendees' questions on the Navy's progress after the 2010 repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

"LGBT Pride Month is held annually and recognizes the importance of diversity within the society, as well as the many achievements of LGBT individuals," said Paul Memije, SWRMC Multicultural Committee chairperson.

The celebration started with the national anthem and a moment of silence for the 49 victims killed in Orlando, Florida's mass shooting June 12.

"Intolerance leads to awful events," said guest speaker retired Lt. Col. Kimberly Enderle. "Fear and prejudice left unchecked can potentially escalate."

Enderle's presentation included a slideshow on the history of lesbian and gay policies in the Department of Defense, beginning as early as the Revolutionary War when the first service member was discharged for homosexuality.

She continued to explain the historical context of discriminatory laws and treatment of homosexuals throughout major events in the United States -- including the Civil War, Westward Expansion, World War I, World War II, the Lavender Scare, the 1960's Gay Rights Movement, 1987's AIDS Quilt, President Clinton's "Don't ask, Don't Tell" policy in 1993 until its repeal in 2010, and the Defense Of Marriage Act (DOMA).

Attendees received additional information on the statistics of administrative costs from separating trained Sailors, recruiting and training replacements, and the number of service members who were separated under DOD's Homosexual Conduct Policy with a list of their occupational skills that made them an asset in the military.

Enderle ended the presentation with an explanation of LGBT Sailors' psychological, social, and economic impact before the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." After her presentation she joined the panel for comments and questions.

"I appreciate the Navy taking interest in LGBT issues and bringing speakers like myself to discuss them," said Enderle.

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